

II. REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT

The Government of Vietnam since the beginning of 1967 has distributed more than 70,000 permanent land titles to farmers. This activity in combination with other GVN-sponsored land reform projects is in part calculated to reap immediate short-term political advantages as well as longer range economic benefits. Revolutionary Development cadre efforts continue to meet with varying degrees of success in several widely scattered parts of the country. The resettlement of some 7,000 persons currently underway in Pleiku Province is now 80 percent complete. The newly settled areas are, however, already showing signs of Communist penetration. In Saigon, a pilot program of free medical service for the needy was scheduled to begin last month and it is hoped to expand it into the provinces during July.

Land Reform

1. US officials in Saigon have reported that the Government of Vietnam (GVN) has distributed more than 70,000 permanent land titles since 1 January 1967. These permanent titles replace temporary land-ownership certificates issued during the Diem regime and have been issued by the GVN to farmers cultivating former French lands and lands seized in 1956 under Ordinance 57. Permanent land titles have reportedly been issued in cases where full payments for the land have not yet been made to the government. The title holders are, however, still liable for the payments due.

2. Two recent decrees are concerned with restructuring the land tenure system. One, a decree of 19 May, clarifies the status and policies of the government relating to lands distributed to people

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by the Viet Cong but which since have come under government control. The second forbids either landlords or government officials from using the Vietnamese military to collect back rents on these lands. In most cases the collection of back rents on the redistributed lands has been suspended by the government.

3. Major problems and inequities which continue to plague the rural areas include: the violation of tenant-landlord contracts and terms of tenure relationships; a biased or inadequate village administrative authority to cope with land disputes; excessive landlord influence on village affairs; and the problems caused by the Communist land distribution and taxation systems.

4. The basic legislation for the redistribution of land in Vietnam--Ordinance 57--was written in 1956. This legislation limited riceland holdings to 247 acres per landlord and an additional 37 acres was allotted for burial purposes. Provisions were made in the legislation to provide payments to landlords for land expropriated under these laws. Of the approximately 772,000 acres seized under Ordinance 57, 615,000 acres were redistributed. Much of the remainder of the land is in insecure areas and no actions have been taken concerning this land.

5. Land reform projects currently sponsored by the GVN are directed toward the redistribution of land and rent controls in order to achieve an immediate political return and some long-term economic benefits. By giving the farmer a firm, permanent title, the government hopes to induce him to invest labor and capital in the land in order to raise production above a marginal level and create an agricultural surplus.

6. One of the programs to strengthen land tenure is being tested in the An Giang (Province) Priority Area. In this area, aerial photos are being taken of the entire province and maps of land holdings are being made from them. This method offers speed, accuracy, and security since little work needs

to be done on the ground. A title produced by this process contains a description of the land and a photo of it, and since the titles are easily reproducible, copies may be given the owner as well as filed centrally. This program has suffered from technical problems, however, and 70 percent of the aerial coverage done thus far must be reflown.

7. Although accurate statistics on rural affairs are not available, USAID has made the following estimate of the percentage of farmers by tenure:

<u>Tenure</u>	<u>Southern provinces(%)</u>	<u>Central low-land provinces(%)</u>
Owner-operators only	23	29
Operators with only rented land	47	11
Operators with both owned and rented land	30	60

Revolutionary Development Cadre Highlights

8. In an attempt to eliminate corruption found in his area of operations, the leader of an RD team in Chau Doc Province provided provincial authorities information on the illicit activities of the chief of the village in which his team was operating. The village chief had been using the local Popular Forces, to terrorize the local residents, collect illegal taxes, and unlawfully seize private property.

9. In an effort to stop the RD team's investigation of these activities, the village chief had gone so far as to have two of the villagers who had been cooperating with the team killed. Provincial authorities had been reluctant to take any actions against the offender but--when faced with evidence of the murders and with the threat of the resignation of the RD team leader--finally jailed the village chief on murder charge. The team leader is continuing to investigate the villagers' charges of corruption against colleagues of the village chief

who are still in office. The province chief--although commending the RD team leader for his actions--has warned him of "danger to his personal security."

10. In Binh Dinh Province on 14 June two RD teams--recent graduates of the National Training Center--moved into two hamlets in the southern part of the province where the Communists in 1964 had forced the majority of the local residents to leave. The arrival of the RD teams was soon followed by the return of approximately 1,200 former inhabitants of the area. In addition, an estimated 600 residents from nearby hamlets have temporarily resettled in the two hamlets for security and have indicated that they will return to their native residences when RD teams are available to help them reestablish their hamlets.

11. Elsewhere in this province, an RD team operating in Phu Cat District enlisted the support of the US engineer battalion to blast rock needed to build a dam being constructed under the self-help program. When the US unit first arrived they had to do all the work themselves; soon, however, the villagers and RD cadre had taken over the manual labor while the engineers provided only technical guidance. This joint venture reportedly has generated more cordial relations between villagers, RD personnel, and US troops in the area.

12. In Vinh Binh Province four RD teams have been working in what were Communist-controlled areas of Cang Long District since February 1967. At the end of May the teams began to discern signs that they had finally begun to overcome the people's apathy and distrust. The teams have been able to stimulate the people to commit themselves to working on a variety of programs designed to improve hamlet life and have enrolled large numbers of the children in government schools. In adjacent Tien Can District, RD teams have helped newly resettled families--who in the early part of the year had left areas under enemy control--to build approximately 400 new homes for themselves.

13. In Phuoc Tuy Province, the Provincial Intelligence Officer--using intelligence furnished by an RD team operating in one of the villages--apprehended 17 members of that village's chapter of the "Liberation Women's Association." The suspects have been sent to the Provincial Interrogation Center.

14. In Khanh Hoa Province the RD Control Committee has initiated a series of broadcasts from the Nha Trang radio station stressing the importance of RD work in the province and citing examples of the people's participation in RD efforts. This is one of the first reported instances of a provincial control committee taking advantage of the local radio station to promote its RD effort. Similar promotional work needs to be done by Vietnamese officials throughout the country in order to explain the goals and achievements of the RD program to the local populace.

Refugees

15. The Edap Enang highlander resettlement project in Pleiku Province which has as its goal the resettlement of approximately 7,000 people is now approximately 80 percent complete. When the project is completed, approximately 1,200 families will have been moved from the Pleiku-Cambodia border areas and resettled along Highway 19 east and south of the city of Pleiku. The movement of the people is the responsibility of the US 4th Infantry Division, with Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) and the GVN's Special Commission for Refugees (SCR) providing the personnel and resources to assist the montagnards in resettling. The security of the resettlement area is being maintained by a Vietnamese Ranger battalion, two Regional Force companies, and two Popular Force platoons.

16. As of the middle of June over 5,600 people--residents of 44 of the 51 hamlets scheduled for resettlement--were evacuated from their previous residences with the majority of the people electing to relocate in the new areas. Within the resettlement areas construction has been completed on 439 new homes while 782 are still being built. There are indications, however, of Communist penetration of the resettlement area. On at least four occasions in May large numbers of highlanders were cajoled or pressured into abandoning the resettlement area by Communist cadre. One of the prevalent propaganda themes of the Communists is to circulate among the highlanders rumors that the US forces do not have enough rice to feed them and that all US forces will soon be leaving Pleiku Province.

17. In Phu Yen Province work has begun on approximately 1,163 self-help homes for refugees. The SCR has announced that it will pay a second resettlement allowance to previously resettled refugees who are constructing new homes for themselves and, in addition, the SCR will provide these people with seed and farm land. The progress made so far in 1967 in the Phu Yen refugee program is encouraging; in 1966 provincial activities were categorized by US advisors as "stagnant."

"New Life Development" Activities

18. The Vietnamese Mutual Assistance Association, a voluntary organization, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Welfare is making plans to provide free medical check-ups and treatment to the needy. Approximately 300 civilian and military physicians have volunteered to participate, and pharmaceutical companies in Saigon have agreed to contribute drugs valued at over 500,000 piastres. The program was scheduled to begin in Saigon at the end of June and expand into the provinces during July. Needy persons seeking medical assistance under this new program have to contact their provincial social welfare center to obtain examination tickets.

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